1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

If no foster mother is available, an infant whose mother dies during childbirth is fed banana water, supplied by the villagers, through a leaf funnel. When an infant is in such danger, the juice from a certain liana is sprinkled over it to make it strong. 846 853]

A woman who has given birth is not allowed to leave her hut until game has fallen into her husband's net. If the camp is moved before this happens, she is hidden in the bush and taken separately to the new camp where she is kept hidden until her new hut is built for her by relatives (not stated which relatives). The husband himself may not join the hunt but sends his net with another member of the group.

The father keeps the arrow that cut the umbilical cord, and the cord itself, until the child is old enough to throw them both away into the forest.

If no animal falls into the husband's net (the rule is extended usually to include some close relative's net) for some weeks, the mother and infant may be brought out of seclusion by the giving of a feast to her relatives. The baby is then shaved with an arrowpoint, bathed, rubbed with oil and red *nkula* paste, and bands [851] •

[1] Note that this took place in a village, where such supernatural explanations are always sought by villagers. It is doubtful that the same explanation would have been given in the forest context. [777 911]

[P 213-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 214-A]

846 of barkcloth are sewed around its arms and
• [851] knees. The father and mother are now freed of most restrictions, but neither may eat meat until the baby can crawl. The exact extent of restrictions on sexual relations[1] during this period is not given by Putnam.

844 Putnam emphasizes the normality of childbirth itself, despite the possibility of ensuing complications such as those described above from Anne Putnam's personal observation. The woman makes no allowance for her condition and may actually be moving from one camp to another when her time comes, in which case she gives birth to the child and then moves on (Putnam, 1948, 339). There is no ritual recogni-
851 tion of the birth of a child. Naming takes place
553 only after some weeks when the infant has shown that it "has come to stay." If it dies
[766] before it has been named, there is no particular ceremony and little mourning except by the mother. There is a great deal of fostering and
597 adoption, according to Putnam (1948, 340),
85 particularly between sisters and women who are friends and who work together. When a woman with young children dies, her sister takes her girls and young boys and looks after the girls until they are marriageable; the father

[177] [1] Again it must be stressed that many such restrictions are part of the village system, and, although the Mbuti may claim to follow them, such adherence is likely to be far from rigid.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

Intermarriage

As pointed out above, this traffic is one-way. There are no records of Pygmy men taking villager wives, nor any acknowledged instances of Pygmy men begetting children by villager mistresses. Blood counts (Schebesta, 1938, 111), however, reveal a small proportion of villager influence in hunting communities, which may or may not be accounted for by the return of the half-breed offspring from the village to the forest. Normally the children of such unions are brought up as villagers. The father will, to the best of his ability, prevent children by his Pygmy wife from returning to the forest, and apparently the Pygmies themselves regard such children as villagers.

There are not enough data on individual intermarriage for us to determine how far this one-way tendency is a form of hypergamy. It may, in fact, simply be the result of the practical consideration that no villager woman could fulfill the requirements of a woman and wife in a Pygmy hunting camp. Even if the latter is the case, it does not answer the question as to why a Pygmy girl should marry a villager. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that gives us even the hint of an answer. There is certainly no

[P 251-B]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

PLATE 28 1/

PYGMY PHYSICAL TYPES, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

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851 a. An Mbuti hunter and child. Every child has a father in every hunter, even in such a case as this, in which the child's mother was a member of the band until she married a villager, who fathered the boy. Such children are brought up in the village, as villagers, and never become members of an Mbuti band, however much affection they might receive when the hunters visit the village.

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202 b. A youth, shortly to become a hunter. He will already be assuming the responsibilities of adulthood, though he is unlikely to own a hunting net of his own until he is married. Elbow clapping is a major means of signaling through the forest. By flexing the elbow against the side of the chest the sound box is enlarged or compressed, causing a variation in pitch, which, when combined with rhythmic variations, allows for the sending of reasonably complex messages. The result of a hunt can be quickly relayed back to the camp in this way.

1/,/Plate 28 appears on page 289--Analyst/

[P.288]

1: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

142
302
855
851

/Plate 28-A/

/Caption appears on p. 288/

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

MARRIAGE

Marriage, as we have already seen, may involve the Mbuti in village ritual, and even if their Mbuti claim to have been married in the forest according to their own rites, the villagers try to insist on a village ceremony. Their concern is that the marriage shall be protected, as in village society, against disruption. As the Mbuti not only have no system of paying bride wealth but have no wealth that could be paid, the villagers are obliged to supply the wealth they deem necessary to help stabilize the marriage. They say that a marriage without wealth will not last. But as with the *nkumbi*, they feel that the major safeguard they secure by putting the Mbuti through the village ritual is that the marriage then becomes the concern of the tribal ancestors and subject to supernatural sanctions, all of which operate in the interests of the villagers.

An important part of the village ceremony formalizing a marriage between two Mbuti is the admonition given by a number of villagers to both groom and bride, reminding them of their old obligations and telling them of the new. The bride is introduced to her husband's *kpara* and his wife, and is told exactly what the wife expects of her; at the same time she is reminded of her own *kpara* and admonished not to forget where her "relatives" live. In fact, the place that would be occupied by the parents of the bride and groom in a normal village ceremony are, when two Mbuti are being married, occupied by the *kpara*. Each admonition generally ends with a reminder that the tribal ancestors of the villagers have been invoked for their blessings, and the tribe has provided generous feasts for all the relatives of the bride and groom, and wealth to boot, so any infidelity or any breach of the bond will call down supernatural wrath upon the (Mbuti) families of all those concerned.

In the various crises that may face the couple now, it will be all the more important for the villagers to take the necessary ritual precautions, and to investigate any calamity for evidence of witchcraft. Mbuti marriages tend to be somewhat unstable until the first child is born, and indeed are not considered as marriages by the Mbuti until then, separation and the formation of new unions being the rule rather than the exception. The villagers tend to suspect that witchcraft is at work, sometimes suspecting an Mbuti, sometimes another villager. Bad hunting and sickness are considered to be due to witch-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Finally it may be remarked that whereas in many African societies, including those of the neighboring villagers, birth fixes the social position of an individual through the structural ramifications of kinship, among the Mbuti it achieves the same end, to a less fixed degree, by placing the individual in a specific age group and relating the infant to a specific locality. The child might not be reared in that locality, but the fact will remain valid as a claim to band membership throughout his or her life. Adoption is often agreed upon in order that a child, or even an adult, may return to his natal band, regardless of what kin remain to him there.[1]

It will also be noticed that in the absence of the magical and supernatural protections that are sought for a newly born child among the villagers nearby, there is a lack of concern with the possibility of disaster, and only a concern that the child should be strong. Insofar as this strength is conveyed by washing the baby with the juice of forest vines, tattooing it with forest ashes, and binding it with forest symbols, this may be regarded as sympathetic magic. But it is better regarded as the beginning of a lifetime of close intimacy between the Mbuti and the forest, an intimacy that may or may not give the physical strength it is believed to convey, but that is undoubtedly responsible for the cohesive social strength found in this one omnipresent, omnipotent symbol of Mbuti unity, the forest.

The absence of formal ritual protection and of the invocation of supernatural aid and attention at birth is the first clear indication that for the Mbuti the norm is the good, and that this goodness derives directly from the forest, physically and spiritually. Although birth is primarily the affair of the nuclear family, all members of the band share the pleasure and the pride of the parents, concern themselves with the welfare and education of the child according to the functions of the different age groups, but they do not see that it is necessary to make of birth what we might here call a "spiritual" occasion. In referring to childbirth the men and women alike say, simply, that "it is the work of women, it is what they are for." There is nothing abnormal about the event, nor is there any expectancy of danger or complication, and so the band does not see that it is necessary to intervene with a formal religious festival.

[1] See Table 11 for examples of adoptions of boys and girls among net-hunters.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

584 for permission for her to live with him. He will already have proved his manhood by running the gauntlet and by sleeping with the girl, and the fact that he has succeeded in these endeavors is alone proof of his acceptance. He now only has to prove himself as a hunter, and the act of betrothal is sealed by his killing one of the larger antelope and presenting it to the girl's parents, perhaps also with some other gifts, such as a bow and arrows, bark cloth, or a machete.

584 591 The girl then goes to live with him, unless it is considered preferable, probably on grounds of band size, for the boy to join the girl's band. In either case, or if they both belong to the same band, the girl simply builds a hut without any ceremony, and they live in it. No particular note is made of the occasion, though there may be a few jokes made at their expense, and they will be allowed considerable 58 freedom from camp routine for a few days. No further change in status • [851] takes place until the girl becomes pregnant, at which time we might consider that the betrothal becomes effective as marriage. Separation before this takes place is perfectly possible and likely, and takes place without any comment, difficulty or restitution. Separation later, after childbirth, is more rare. If a couple have lived together for a long time (over a year) without having children, they will also be considered as married. This is unusual, however, for the object of marriage is in good part to have children, and if a couple fails, each will accuse the other of sterility and seek a new partner.

584 621 583 In seeking a partner who has not slept with him in the *elima* hut, a boy goes through the same procedure, except that the band will be called on to give its approval, and the prospective union will be discussed, elders having the most say. If he is refused, and if he and the girl are persistent, they may elope, joining another band. In this case that other band will be expected to provide a girl in exchange, for the system, such as it is, is one of sister exchange in the widest classificatory sense of the term. It frequently does take place between full brothers and sisters, but equally frequently there is no attempt to effect exchange so long as the married couple remains within the band. If the marriage is out of the band, then any return marriage, regardless of kinship, is considered to restore the balance. Again, in view of the constant fluctuation in band composition, it would be of no advantage for any more formal system to pertain.